November 2019

Rural businesses to benefit from £35m government fund

Grants of up to £750,000 available to rural firms to boost productivity and create local jobs

Rural businesses across the country are set to benefit from a guaranteed £35 million in government funding to create new jobs, boost tourism, and unlock growth in rural areas. This figure could be increased to £50 million if there are enough high-quality applications. The government’s Growth Programme, which opens for expressions of interest on Monday 4 November, provides grants for rural start-ups and businesses to purchase state-of-the-art equipment and machinery to grow their business or open up opportunities for tourism. The scheme has already granted £99 million to 546 local businesses across England, creating 3,771 new jobs in rural areas. In Sheffield, the farmers behind the brand Our Cow Molly secured a grant of more than £160,000 to invest in a new processing unit, which allowed them to produce higher quality fresh milk and ice cream – creating six new jobs. Elsewhere, the North York Moors Railway Trust was awarded a grant to preserve 50 historic train carriages and steam engines, helping to increase visitor numbers, encourage more overnight stays in the local area and create additional jobs in the community. Farming Minister George Eustice said: Our dedicated fund for rural businesses has created more than 3,700 jobs and supported a diverse group of businesses, tourism operations and start-ups to unlock their full potential. This next round of funding will help more businesses to grow and local areas to prosper – and I would urge any rural enterprise to look into what this scheme could do for them. I would also encourage farmers to consider how they might use this funding to branch out and diversify their businesses, making the most of emerging trends and tastes and looking ahead to new opportunities. For this funding round of the Growth Programme, the threshold for minimum grants has come down from £35,000 to £20,000, meaning that more small or micro-businesses can be eligible for a grant for their projects. Paul Caldwell, Chief Executive of the Rural Payments Agency, said: The Growth Programme provides funding to the 98% of the rural economy in England that isn’t directly engaged in farming. From heritage railways to creameries and vineyards, small and micro-businesses have benefited from the investment available under the Growth Programme in recent years. We are looking to support applications from businesses with ambitious plans to grow their business and provide wider benefits to their local community. I would urge all interested applicants to submit their expressions of interest as soon as possible to ensure they have plenty of time to complete a full application if their project is assessed to be eligible. The RDPE Growth Programme handbook is available on GOV.UK and contains information on which projects are deemed eligible for a grant and how to apply. Interested parties need to send an Expression of Interest form to the Rural Payments Agency, outlining how they meet the criteria for the scheme –
from creating new jobs, increasing business turnover and improving productivity. If the Rural Payments Agency considers the project to be eligible, the applicant will then be invited to submit a full application. The **deadline for all Expressions of Interest is Sunday 16 February 2020.** For further information: [https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rural-businesses-to-benefit-from-35m-government-fund](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rural-businesses-to-benefit-from-35m-government-fund)

**Open Events**

**Beef Housing Talk with Dawn Clarke from Zoetis and Bridgmans in attendance.** Liver Fluke, Worm Control and Lice in cattle during the winter. Prevention? Recommendations, Understand the parasites and how to control them? **Date:** Monday 11th November 2019  **Time:** 7.30pm prompt – 9pm. **Venue:** Exford Social Club. A complimentary sandwich buffet included. Booking essential for catering purposes. See attached poster for information.

**EHFN Christmas Review 2019- Celebrating 5 years**

Join us for our Annual Christmas Review 2019. Canapes followed by a 3 course meal. Dave Knight will lead the evening with a review of our network activities during 2019. We are delighted to welcome Matt Cole, farming on Dartmoor as our guest speaker for the evening. **Invitation**

**Date:**  Thursday 12th December 2019  **Time:** 7pm for 7.30pm  **Venue:** The Music Room, Woolhanger Manor , Parracombe Devon EX31 4RF by kind permission of Mr and Mrs G Mellstrom  **Guest Speaker:** Matt Cole – ‘**Life of a Dartmoor Hill Beef and Sheep Farmer and Director of Dartmoor Farmers Ltd.**’  **Tickets:** £25.50ph / Next Generation members £20 (Under 30’s). **PRIZE DRAW and BAR available . Invitation and reply slip attached.**

**Future proofing your business for profitable production – Postponed**

We would like to invite you to join us for an evening with David Pett, AHDB Knowledge Exchange, to learn about what Farmbench is, and how it can help you future proof your business with a focus on cost of production.

**Date:** Thursday 7th November 2019,**Time:** 7pm start **Venue:** Withypool Village Hall, TA24 7RH.

**Partner Events**
Masons Kings Open Day

Date: Thursday 28\textsuperscript{th} November 2019  
Time: 2pm-9pm.  
Venue: Exebridge Depot TA22 9BL.

Exclusive offers, winter deals, meet the manufacturers and competitions available. Enjoy a free hog roast and refreshments. Fun for all the family.  

See attached poster

NSA South West Region to Visit leading Research Farm

NSA South West Region will be visiting the North Wyke farm site of the Rothamstead Institute on Thursday 28\textsuperscript{th} November from 1.30pm to 4pm. The visit will include an excellent opportunity to visit their new small ruminant research facility and meet with some of their researchers. For more information or to book a place on this visit please contact NSA South West Region Secretary Ian May on 07913 043234 or email ian@nationalsheep.org.uk

Peer Support Groups

Exmoor Women in Farming Group – November Meeting

An evening with Rebecca Ward from Baldwins Accountants. Topic to be confirmed  
Date: Tuesday 26\textsuperscript{th} November 2019  
Venue: tbc  
Peer Support Contribution: £5pp  
Time: 7pm -9.30pm. Further details to follow.  
Save the date for now

Training Opportunities

Mental Health First Aid Training – November 2019

Adult MHFA Two Day course qualifies you as a mental Health First Aider (MHFAider).

Dates of training: Thursday 21\textsuperscript{st} and Friday 22\textsuperscript{nd} November 2019

Venue: Dulverton,

Time: 9am -5pm ( pack lunch required)

Cost: £150pp

Mental Health First Aiders have:

- An in depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support - whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix
- We limit numbers to 12 people per course so that the instructor can keep people safe and supported while they learn. The course is delivered in four sessions over two days.

You will get an informative in depth manual & workbook. When you complete the two days you'll also receive a certificate to say you are a Mental Health First Aider.

We recommend that this qualification is updated every 2 years by attending the half-day course as a refresher, to remain competent and up to date on best practice. We will keep you updated when this is due.

**Emergency at Work First Aid Course- (one day)**

**Date:** Wednesday 27th November 2019  **Venue:** Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross. **Cost:** £50pp  **Time:** 9am for 9.15am start-4pm. Aims and principles of first aid, legalities, responsibilities, record keeping and reporting, assessment of the situation, basic hygiene in first aid, shock, dealing with an unconscious casualty, seizure, resuscitation/ CPR/ defibrillators, minor injuries, bleeding control, choking, heart attacks and angina. To book please contact the office.

**Other News**

**SURVEY LAUNCHED INTO BUSINESS ON EXMOOR**

A major new survey into the views of businesses in Exmoor has launched as the next step in the Rural Enterprise Exmoor initiative*. It aims to better understand the types of business activity undertaken across the National Park as well as the challenges and opportunities of doing business on Exmoor. Over 100 delegates from a broad range of businesses and support agencies on Exmoor met last week (Thursday 24th October) for the official launch of Rural Enterprise Exmoor. Attendees heard from three local companies that have grown on Exmoor, including the hi-tech work of ‘Singer Instruments’ designing scientific robotics in Roadwater, Award winning artisan gin maker ‘Wicked Wolf’ based in Brendon, and the acclaimed ‘West Country Blacksmiths’ who’ve recently expanded their premises at Allerford Forge.
They were also introduced to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, who are helping fund Rural Enterprise Exmoor. “Bringing together so many business interests on Exmoor was a fantastic opportunity to consider how we can better work together to support the Exmoor economy, whilst respecting the special status of the area as a National Park” said Dan James, Exmoor National Park Authority’s Sustainable Economy Manager.

“There was a real buzz in the room and it was great to see so many businesses swapping ideas and contacts. During the session a key opportunity identified was raising the profile of Exmoor as a brand through celebrating the key strengths of the area and its businesses.”The 5-minute online survey is open until the end of the year to any business based or operating within Exmoor. There is an option for respondents to complete a further set of questions after completing the survey, either online or by requesting a telephone survey, to explore some of the issues in more depth.

“It’s so important that we get to hear individual business views” continued Mr James. “With some of the highest proportions of micro businesses, self-employment and homebased working in the country it can be difficult, through official data, to fully comprehend the breadth and depth of business activity within the National Park. Rural Enterprise Exmoor will help ensure business, from the smallest one-man band to the largest employers on Exmoor, all have the chance to be heard and to raise the issues most important to them. We strongly encourage any businesses from any sector to participate in the survey and to encourage other businesses to do likewise.” The survey is available at http://bit.ly/ExmoorRESurvey, on the Exmoor National Park website at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/living-and-working/business-and-economy/rural-enterprise-exmoor and via @RuralEntExmoor on Facebook and Twitter. Participants could win a delicious Exmoor food hamper.

Commercial Adverts

A big Thank you to key partners and members for advertising their vacancies / opportunities, via our extensive database of over 500 individual contacts. We are always eager to receive feedback from the adverts. Every advert circulated generates a small income for the network. So thank you! If you wish to advertise please get in touch with us to discuss further.

To book or for further information please contact Katherine Williams on 07970795808 or Kwilliams@northdevonplus.co.uk